



EUGENIE CHAN THEATER PROJECTS

**ECTP COVID
IMPACT RESPONSE
SURVEY PROJECT**

Introduction

At the very end of 2020, ECTP had just finished a devising process via Zoom to develop a digital version of *The Truer History of the Chan Family*, something we envisioned our audiences could safely view online. Since we could no longer present a live performance during the Covid-19 pandemic, we pivoted to a virtual one. We were about to go into production when the January 2021 Covid-19 surge hit. Ugh. We decided to postpone until the public health landscape became safe to create again.

But when would that be? What kind of health and safety protocols could we expect? Would audiences return? If they did return, what kind of theater experience would they want?

To answer these questions we went to our best source: our community. In August 2021 we emailed surveys tailored to three core groups: our Patrons, Peer Producers, and Community Partners. You will see our overarching takeaways and our detailed analyses in the report that follows.

We are extremely grateful to all who responded. In addition, we thank the Ronald H. Epstein Foundation and the Phyllis C. Wattis Covid Relief Fund for their support. A special shout out of appreciation to survey specialist, Shauna Satnick, whose superb analyses power this report.

The purpose of this survey is to serve as a guide to moving forward for ECTP and colleagues in a time of pandemic-informed arts programming and production. Included in this document are analyses, data visualizations, and recommendations based on the ECTP 2021 Patron Survey, Peer Producer Survey, and Community Partner Survey. The surveys consisted of multiple-choice questions, “check all that apply” boxes, and short answers. Each section is broken down by survey type and furthermore by question. All surveys were anonymous.

The survey was distributed to ECTP patrons, fellow arts producers and AAPI-centric community partners (cultural and neighborhood centers) through our opt-in mailing list and 1:1 outreach. The creators of the survey and summary are not trained data collectors, but worked together, referencing best practices and survey questionnaire design and reporting format from Shugall Research, Arts Services Inc, Indigo-Ltd, CAST, and Audience Outlook Monitor.

Acknowledgments

Survey content and design, graphic design, editors: Eugenie Chan & Marcy Straw

Survey formatting, deployment, data collection, compilation and analysis of findings: Shauna Satnick



Patron Survey Findings & ECTP Response

Two major findings stand out from our Patron survey:

- A majority ¹ surveyed are ready to return to in-person performance in 2022
- AAPI audiences are more unsure about when they will return.

In response to these findings, ECTP is creating a free-to-the public hybrid in-person/online performance as our next full-scale production.

Our hybrid production will allow audiences who are comfortable returning to in-person to engage in a show that weaves together live and digital performance; audiences more comfortable viewing from home will be able to access a high-quality, innovative, and on-demand video through their smart devices or computers.

In-person events will require proof of vaccination and masking, limit the number of audiences attending, and engage robust cleaning procedures and good ventilation at welcoming

community centers, all highly ranked requests from our target AAPI audiences who are comfortable returning in-person.

While a majority of patrons are ready to return in 2022, because this hybrid experience will be a larger, newer production for ECTP, **we anticipate launching in 2023 out of respect for our capacity and team members.**

Notably, one AAPI patron wrote about her fear of anti-Asian violence keeping her away: "Used to go to lots of shows and now not so much. What does get me is the Asian bashing. I am keeping distance primarily because of that, I just don't feel the streets are safe."

¹ A majority of survey respondents identify as white 43%; female 51%; between 55 – 74 years 67%. 34% identify as AAPI. (Compare to 2017 post-show survey respondents: white 46%; AAPI 40%; 55 years – above 57%. 2019 event was majority AAPI.)



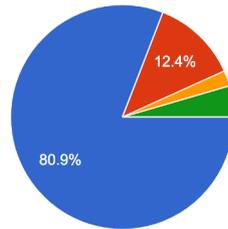
“As you're connecting with your audiences, it's also important to listen to those on your team”

From an optional Community Partner survey question: As ECTP aims to serve Asian American Pacific Islander community audiences, is there anything else you feel is important for us to know?

Patrons told us about their pre-COVID event attendance

1. How often did you attend in-person cultural events before COVID-19?

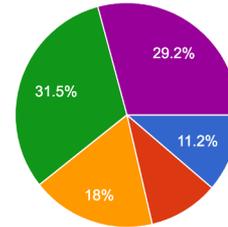
89 responses



- More than 4 times per year
- 2 or 3 times per year
- Once a year
- Less than once a year

4. How many ECTP events have you attended before COVID-19?

89 responses



- 4 or more
- 3
- 2
- 1
- I have never attended an ECTP event

Pre-Covid, 81% were attending cultural events 4 times a year; 21% of these had attended 3 or more ECTP events.

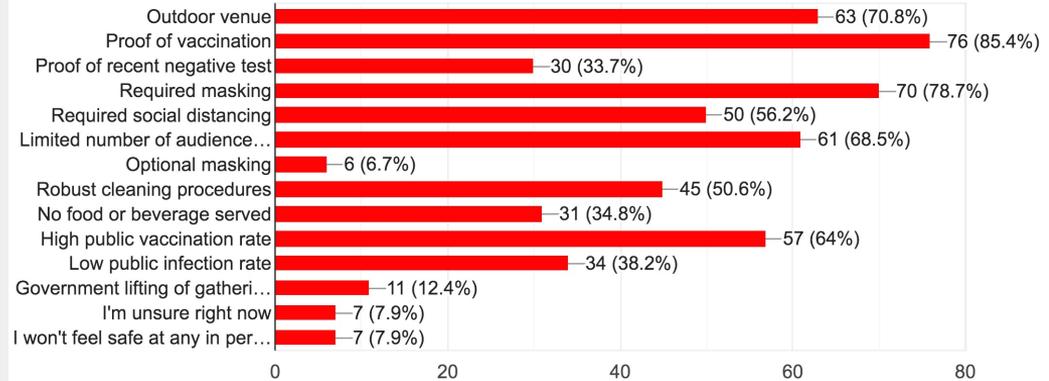
Over 61% had been to 1 ECTP event, or not at all. 18% had attended two.

Top responses for what would make them feel safe:

- Required masking - 79%
- Proof of vaccination - 76%
- Outdoor venue - 71%
- Limited number of audience members - 69%
- High public vaccination rate - 64%
- Required social distancing - 56%
- Robust cleaning procedures - 51%

2. In general, what will make you feel safe attending in-person events? Check all that apply.

89 responses



7

38% cited a "low public infection rate", 35% wanted "no food or beverage served", 34% cited "proof of recent negative test", and 12% wanted to see a "government lifting of gathering restrictions".

How are they feeling now?

What else would make them feel safe?

Enforcement, Proof of vaccination, Masks, Testing, Ventilation

"Venue staff actively enforcing masks, social distancing, vaccination proof"

"Posting polite but firm policy"

"If indoors, knowledge that there is a modern well-functioning air filtration system"

"Enforcement of masking -- over the nose and mouth!"

"Knowing most audience [members]"

"I am unable to vaccinate and I would feel safe if everyone were tested versus since anyone can spread it"

"Outdoors and masked, I'd feel safe now. I don't plan to return to inside events until infection rates are very low"

"I'm fully vaccinated and feel safe to attend in-person events regardless of what other people are doing. I keep an eye on news stories about hospitalizations + deaths in case there's danger from some variant, but I haven't seen anything to worry me yet"

"Everyone who attends the events has a proof of being fully vaccinated."

"If indoor, a very modern and well-maintained high quality hvac system that meets covid safety guidelines"

"If the maniac conservative leaders stop fomenting anti-vax sentiment and help the country raise it's vax rate enough to achieve herd immunity."

"An usher (sadly) patrolling to make sure masks stay on. No nose breathers, thanks"

"A sense that the organization has safety as a high priority for its audience"

"Live stream virtual option"

"I don't need anything else"

"Creating a communal culture at the theatre of respect and caring for each other through our own behavior. Essentially a selection bias in who chooses to attend."

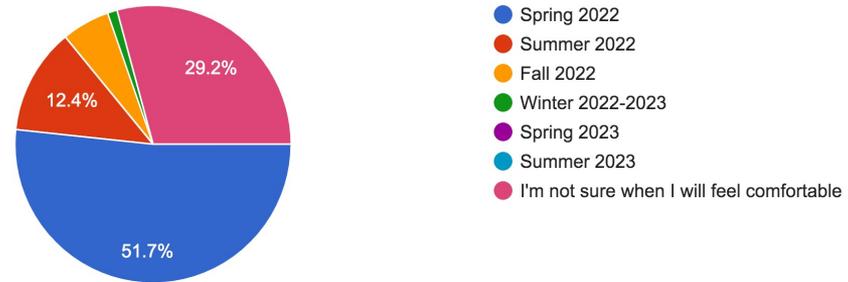
"I generally feel comfortable in attending events in SF."

"The more people the better."

So when would they return?

5. If ECTP follows the precautions you selected in question 2, when would you consider returning to our events?

89 responses



52% would return in Spring 2022. Nearly 30% are not sure when they'll feel comfortable, while 12% would feel comfortable returning in Summer 2022.

6% would consider returning in Fall 2022 and 1% would consider returning by Winter 2022-23.

Have they been watching theater online?

- *YES! 67% watched online programming.*
- 40% watched < 1x month, 23% a few times a month.
- 5% watched a few times a week.



- 31% liked the new and different experience.
- 17% liked unique online visual, sound, or design elements.
- 50% liked watching online anytime (on demand).
- 15% enjoyed the ability to join a live post/pre-show event.
- 63% liked access to online programs through a link emailed 1-2 days in advance, and that they could watch from home.
- 55% liked low-cost/free programming and will keep watching.

- 6% watched online programs 1x week.
- *21% never watched online programs offered by theaters.*
- 27% will stop after in-person restrictions are lifted.

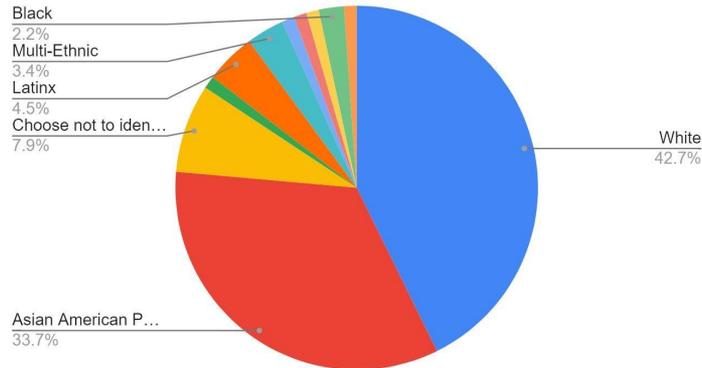


- 8% and 1%, respectively, liked interacting with performers and the ability to influence the story.
- 33% did not like the "2-dimensionality of screen."
- 19% did not like "low production qualities."
- 18% disliked the "clumsy use of technology."
- 9% found it hard to access the links or reported a bad internet connection.

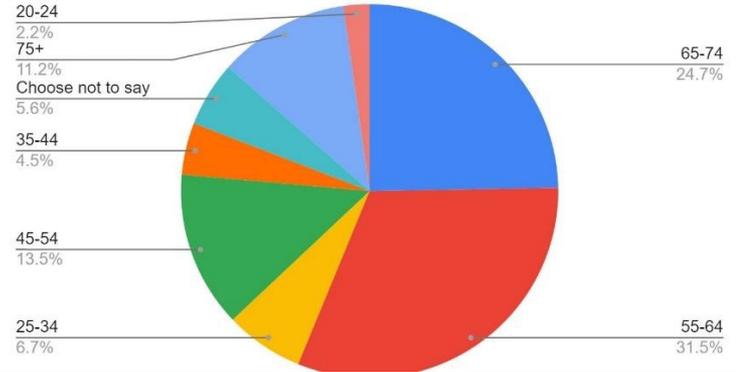
Who are they? Where are they?

- Over half are female
- 44% are 55-75+
- Whites comprise 43%; AAPI 34%

4. Do you identify as:



2. What is your age?



- 40% reside in San Francisco
- 29% in the rest of the Bay Area
- 6% are in Southern California
- 5% are in Northern California
- 9% are outside California



"Now that theater is back, I want all plays to be in-person and ten hours long."

"Quality is most important"

"I miss live theater. The reason I never went online. No soul. Theater is meant to be experienced live...then it's magic!!"

"Great idea to do this survey. It comes at a moment where I am trying to decide if I want to buy tickets to the Fugees. It would not be a question but still not sure about being in such close quarters with so many people. Also: I go with my 10-year-old...who can't be vaccinated. So that makes it more of a challenge. Outside is good!"

*"Good luck Eugenie! You are amazing and I wish you all good luck getting the show (literally) back on the road!
xoxoRaphael"*

"I'm located in NYC and have already been to several in-person theater events, starting last summer. Audiences seem comfy providing proof of vaccination and wearing masks indoors, while the actors remain unmasked."

"As a senior citizen, I would be particularly vulnerable to exposure despite precautions."

"I do not live in area. I support your work from afar. Great job Eugenie Chan!!"



Conclusions

Overall, while there's still much uncertainty, patrons want to return to the theater in Spring 2022, including women and 55+. While many will start attending theater in-person, most will continue to view programming online alongside in-person events.

Top protocol that would make patrons surveyed feel comfortable in returning to theater is proof of vaccination. Others commonly listed include required masking, outdoor venue, limited number of audience members, and high public vaccination rate. Consistently across all target audiences (55+, women, and AAPI), government lifting of restrictions and uncertainty are not important determining factors for one's comfort for returning.

If ECTP offers online programming, promotes the event as a "new and different experience", while focusing on the visual/audio design elements that not possible in-person, a 3D experience, high production quality and graceful use of technology, will engage audiences and encourage repeat attendance.

Not focusing on the audience's ability to interact with performers nor ability to influence the story.

Emailing a link for the online programming 1-2 days in advance would improve access.

Making the performance viewable for a period of time (not just live) so patrons can watch on demand.

55+ and women tend to follow the trends of the overall group of respondents; AAPI varies from the other groups specifically as to when they would feel comfortable returning. As AAPI is a key audience for ECTP, promoting/creating hybrid online /in-person events is key to keep all target audiences engaged meaningfully.

Appendix:

List of All Questions

Target Audience Comparisons

We first asked about their pandemic-era patron behavior

1. How often did you attend in-person cultural events before COVID-19?
2. In general, what will make you feel safe attending in-person events?
Check all that apply.
3. Optional: What else would make you feel safe?
4. How many ECTP events have you attended before COVID-19?
5. If ECTP follows the precautions you selected in question 2, when would you consider returning to our events?
6. Since the pandemic, how often have you watched online programming offered by other theaters?
7. What did you like about it? Check all that apply.
8. What did you NOT like about it? Check all that apply.
9. What made it easy for you to access these online programs? Check all that apply.
10. In the future, do you think you will continue to view online programming?

Demographic Questions

1. Tell us where you reside.
2. What is your age?
3. Do you identify as:
4. Do you identify as:
5. Optional: Finally, is there anything else you'd like us to know?

Your feedback is valuable to us.

55+ RESPONSES

A majority of ECTP's patrons report being 55+ (~73%); below are comparisons of responses from patrons surveyed who are between the ages of 55-64, 65-74 and 75+.

55+ Age vs. what will make you feel safe returning: Q2 - In general, what will make you feel safe attending in-person events?

Respondents 55+ reported that "proof of vaccination" would make them feel safe returning to in-person programming. In ranking order, the other ways in which patrons over 55 would feel safe returning: Required masking, outdoor venue, limited number of audience members, robust cleaning procedures, and high public vaccination rate. Ranked at the bottom was "government lifting of gathering restrictions" followed by "I'm unsure right now."

55+ Age vs. when would you return: Q5 - If ECTP follows the precautions you selected in question 2, when would you consider returning to our events?

A majority of patrons (46%) said they'd feel comfortable returning in Spring 2022, while others are not sure when (32%). About 14% of respondents said they'd feel comfortable returning in Summer 2022, and 6% in Fall 2022. Only one respondent said they'd feel comfortable coming back in Winter 2022-23. Those over 55 have the highest response rate for Spring 2022 over AAPI and Women. This population mirrored the general pool's feeling about returning.

55+ vs. continue with online programming: Q10 - In the future, do you think you will continue to view online programming?

Finally, nearly half said "I will continue participating in some online programming, along with in-person." Tied for the second and third most common responses are: "I will stop after in-person restrictions are lifted" (20%) and "I'm not sure" (20%). And, tied for the least common responses: "I will primarily view online" (1.5%) and "Yes, it's unlikely I will return to in-person events" (1.5%).

AAPI RESPONSES

As a ECTP's target audience primarily identifies as Asian American Pacific Islander, below are comparisons of responses from patrons surveyed who identify as AAPI.

AAPI vs. what will make you feel safe attending: Q2 - In general, what will make you feel safe attending in-person events?

When asked what will make them feel safe returning to in-person events, AAPI ranked proof of vaccination, limited number of audience members, and required masking at the top of the list of precautions. Other closely ranked options include: required social distancing, robust cleaning procedures, high public vaccination rate, and outdoor venue. The option which was least ranked was government lifting of restrictions and "I'm unsure right now." Ranking of safety precautions by AAPI differed from that of the general pool of respondents. While "proof of vaccination" remains consistently at the top of the list across all groups, AAPI rank "limited number of audience members" and "robust cleaning procedures" higher. AAPI ranked "Outdoor venue" and "high public vaccination rate" lower on the list of safety precautions.

AAPI vs. when would you return: Q5 - If ECTP follows the precautions you selected in question 2, when would you consider returning to our events?

40% of AAPI respondents said that they're not sure when they'll feel comfortable coming back, followed by 30% who said Spring 2022. Notably, no one said "Winter 2022-23." About 23% said Summer 2022 and approx. 7% said Fall 2022. AAPI have a higher rate of uncertainty about returning than the general pool of respondents, 55+, and women.

AAPI vs. continue with online programming: Q10 - In the future, do you think you will continue to view online programming?

Much like the general pool of respondents and those 55+, 60% of AAPI said that they "will continue participating in some online programming, along with in-person." Approx. 27% are not sure if they'll continue to view online. AAPI rank their uncertainty higher and "I will stop after in-person restrictions are lifted" much lower than the 55+ and general pool of respondents.

WOMEN RESPONSES

As 51% of ECTP's target audience identifies as women, below are visualizations comparing respondents who identify as women.

Women vs. what will make you feel safe attending" Q2: In general, what will make you feel safe attending in-person events?

Similar to the other subsets and general pool of respondents, women prioritize "proof of vaccination" as the option that will make them feel most safe attending in-person events. This is followed by "required masking," "outdoor venue" and "limited number of audience members." Women rank "government lifting of gathering restrictions" and "I'm not sure right now" at the bottom of the list of safety precautions.

Women vs. when would you return : Q5 - If ECTP follows the precautions you selected in question 2, when would you consider returning to our events?

24% of women reported feeling comfortable returning in Spring 2022; 18% were uncertain when they would feel comfortable. Much like the other subsets and general pool of respondents, 11% report comfort in coming back in Summer 2022 and 4% in Fall 2022. Only one respondent indicated Winter 2022-23.

Women vs. continue with online programming: Q10 - In the future, do you think you will continue to view online programming?

62% of women say they will continue to participate in some online programs along with in-person. 20% say they will stop viewing online programs after in-person restrictions are lifted. While 15% are unsure, 2% say they will primarily view online. No one said it was unlikely that they would return to in-person events. Women reflect the overall trends of the general respondent pool as well as the 55+ and AAPI subsets regarding continuing to view online programming.



Target Audience Comparison: 55+, AAPI, Women

RETURNING TO IN PERSON EVENTS

55+ have the highest response rate in choosing to return to in person events in Spring 2022, over AAPI and Women. 55+ mirrored the general respondent pool's timeframe to return. The next chosen return date for 55+ , women, and general respondents is Summer 2022, followed by Fall 2022. At 40%, AAPI have a higher percentage of uncertainty about returning than general respondents, 55+, and women, followed by AAPI choices Summer 2022, Fall 2022. One 55+ respondent and one AAPI are unlikely to return to in-person.

SAFETY

Similar to general respondents, 55+, AAPI, and women rank "proof of vaccination" as the highest protocol that would make them feel safe at in person events, followed by "required masking."

AAPI rank "limited number of audience members" and "robust cleaning procedures" higher than and "outdoor venue" and "high public vaccination rate" lower than other groups.

ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

Overall, like general respondents, a majority of 55+, AAPI and women report that they "will continue participating in some online programming, along with in person." Ranked second for 55+ are both uncertainty about continuing online engagement and the wish to "stop after in-person restrictions are lifted." Women also rate second: "I will stop after in-person restrictions are lifted." AAPI rank their uncertainty higher (27%) about continuing with online engagement and the desire to "stop after in-person restrictions are lifted" much lower than 55+ and women.